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NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

NOTE ON THE INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE TO THE EIGHTH BOOK OF CAESAR'S *GALLIC WAR*¹

In a Note which appeared in *Classical Philology*, Vol. II (p. 92) Professor Kelsey discusses a sentence of this letter, which he quotes as it probably appeared in the archetypal manuscript.

Coactus adsiduis tuis vocibus, Balbe, cum cotidiana mea recusatio non difficultatis excusationem, sed inertiae videretur deprecationem habere, difficillimam rem suscepi: Caesaris nostri commentarios rerum gestarum Galliae non comparantibus superioribus atque insequentibus eius scriptis contexui novissimumque imperfectum ab rebus gestis Alexandriae confeci usque ad exitum non quidem civilis dissensionis, cuius finem nullum videmus, sed vitae Caesaris.

The word *comparantibus* has been generally condemned as corrupt. Five emendations are enumerated by Mr. Kelsey, and there have been others. The emenders agree in their view of the meaning which the text originally conveyed. The seven books of the *Gallie War* and the three which recite the *Civil War* do not "fit on;" there is (to use the phrase by which Dr. Johnson defined a rent in a garment) "a cessation of continuity." Mr. Kelsey rejects all the emendations, on the ground that the required sense may just as easily be extracted from the reading of the archetype. He quotes Livy 40. 26: non possumus non vereri ne male comparati sitis, where *male comparati* means "unevenly matched together." This application of *comparare*, derived from the gladiatorial arena, is of course common. But from *male comparare* to *male comparantibus* in the letter of Hirtius, it is a far cry, grammatically speaking. Could Hirtius treat *comparari* so thoroughly as a deponent verb, that he could write the present participle with deponent meaning? The only common intransitive employment of *comparare*, in such phrases as *sortiri aut comparare* (less usually *parare*), cannot be made to yield any support to the text. Had the MS given *comparatis*, there would have been more to say in defense, and I thought at one time that this might be the true lection. But it now seems that, grammar apart, both *comparantibus* and *comparatis* are indefensible on the score of meaning. It is hardly likely that Hirtius would speak of the *Gallie War* and the *Civil War* as "badly matched" merely because the time covered by the

¹The emendation here offered was proposed in a letter to Professor Kelsey and this paper was written at his suggestion.

one is not continuous with that covered by the other. Such an expression would only apply to some inequality inherent in the works themselves, such as their difference in style, or in length.

We must look in another direction for a remedy. I think that Hirtius wrote *non comparentes*, that is to say "missing." He treats the writings which would have to be added to the *commentarii* written by Caesar, as *commentarii* that were "missing." The phrase *non comparere* is of frequent occurrence in good Latin. Of Romulus and other heroes who had vanished from human ken and joined the gods it is often said, *non comparuit* (ἡφανίσθη). Ovid *Met.* 6. 410 describes as *non comparens pars*, the shoulder of Pelops which was eaten at the banquet when the gods were guests, and was replaced by ivory. The emendation which I have suggested does not make it absolutely necessary to strike out the word *Galliae*, which has been almost unanimously rejected. Hirtius may first speak of his intended completion of the history of the Gallic War; then of the period from the outbreak of the Alexandrine War to the death of Caesar. But one difficulty remains. Why does Hirtius use the plural *commentarios* of *Bell. Gall.* viii, while the singular *commentarium* is applied (apparently) to the remainder of the records which he intended to compile? It is better, perhaps, to suppose that *Galliae* has intruded itself here from the title of MSS of the "Gallic War;" *commentarios* will then apply to the whole of the compositions taken in hand by Hirtius. In that case the words from *novissimumque imperfectum* onward give a description of the later of the two portions implied in *commentarios*. There is in these words, I believe, a slight ellipse. Hirtius means that he finished the book containing the Alexandrine War, and carried on the story (in other books) to the death of Caesar. The language used by Hirtius makes it certain that Caesar himself had begun an account of the struggle at Alexandria, and this renders it probable that he had contemplated the narration of all the events to which Hirtius addressed himself. This fact exhibits the phrase *non comparentes* as particularly appropriate. It can hardly be that any work of Caesar himself is included in the present *Bellum Alexandrinum*. Whether Hirtius ever accomplished his task or not we shall never know. The letter implies that he did, but it may have been sent to Balbus in advance for his approval. I agree with what seems now to be the general opinion, that *Bell. Gall.* viii is all that we have from the hand of Hirtius.¹

There is no actual need to justify the emendation which I have proposed, on paleographical grounds. I should not touch on that matter, had I not oftentimes seen scholars of high rank demanding justification of the commonest paleographical phenomena. Thus Karl Lehmann,

¹The *Bellum Hispaniense* seems to be a rough soldier's report, prepared as material for a literary man. For a similar purpose, L. Verus demanded *commentarios* from provincial commanders (Fronto, p. 131 Nab.).

commenting on Cicero *Ad Atticum* xi. 21, finds the intrusion of *que* into a MS to be inexplicable; yet an indefinite number of examples may be adduced from the codices. I will therefore only say that assimilation of neighboring words such as I have assumed in the change from *comparentes* to *comparantibus* under the influence of *superioribus*, is so usual that it is not possible to go very far in reading the evidence of MSS for any Latin text without coming across parallels. The weary eye of the copyist (often totally ignorant of the sense of what he was copying) failed to instruct his hand aright. Some examples of errors of this kind are collected by C. F. W. Mueller in a critical note on Cicero *Fam.* 4. ii. 1.

I do not wish to traverse much farther the extensive range of problems connected with the continuations of Caesar's work, but I will deal with a few references or supposed references in later literature which seem capable of more precise interpretation than they have hitherto received. It is well known that Orosius, in lib. vi "Historiarum adversus paganos," cc. 7-12, uses material derived from the eight books of the *Gallie War*, but assigns it to "Suetonius Tranquillus." That he had the full text of the *Bellum Gallicum* before him is, judging from his ordinary methods, most improbable. There existed, therefore, some epitome by a writer who used a MS with a superscription somewhat resembling that in the Moissac codex and that in the Bongarsianus. That the attribution to Suetonius could ever have been made except as the consequence of some paleographical accident, seems incredible. It is a curious fact that Orosius, who certainly used the text of Suetonius' biographies, never quotes from the biography of Julius Caesar. Zangemeister indeed supposes that in iii. 14. 5 a tale told of Caesar by Suetonius in ca. 87 of his life (and also by Plutarch *Caes. b.* 3) was transferred thence by Orosius and stuffed into the life of Alexander the Great. But the tale is one that was attached, in practically the same form, to many great names. Was the Epitome of the *Bellum Gallicum* substituted in the MS of Suetonius used by Orosius, for the biography of Iulius? If so, the appearance of Suetonius' name in some MSS of the *Gallie War* itself, might have been due to transference and extension of the original title.

Another interesting passage occurs in Apollinaris Sidonius *Ep.* 9. 14. Writing to a young friend, he urges him to complete a promised eulogy of Caesar: "quae materia tam grandis est, ut studentum si quis fuerit ille copiosissimus, nihil amplius in ipsa debeat cavere, quam ne quid minus dicat. Nam si omittantur quae de titulis dictatoris inuicti scripta Patavinis sunt voluminibus, quis opera Suetonii, quis Iuventii Martialis historiam, quisve ad extremum Balbi ephemeridem fando adaequaverit?" It has been frequently supposed that by *Suetonii opera* is meant *Bell. Gall.* i-vii, and by *Balbi ephemeridem*, the eighth book, written by Hirtius at the request of Balbus. I cannot bring myself to believe that the bishop of Clermont, who was among the most distinguished "Gauls"

of his time, who was learned and cultivated to a high degree for that age, and descended from high officials of the empire, can have been ignorant that the first seven books of the "Gallic War" were written by Caesar. Symmachus, who had Gaulish instructors, was under no illusion about the authorship. It is better to understand *Suetonii opera* as including the Life of Caesar, and the other writings in which Caesar was mentioned as litterateur and orator.¹ The "historia" of Iuuentius Martialis is completely unknown; it is pretty certain that he was a writer of later date than Suetonius. It is extraordinarily strange that Sidonius should now go back to literature before Livy and pick out *Bell. Gall.* viii as a specimen of brilliance in style. It is far more probable that *Balbi ephemeris* is some writing of a later period still, and nearer Sidonius' own time. The name *Balbi* is not improbably corrupt. But considering the vast compass of the historical literature produced in the time of the empire, it would not be strange if some Balbus, born late in time, did treat the life of Caesar.² It is at all events hardly credible that Sidonius should have indicated *Bell. Gall.* viii as good material for a rhetorical eulogy. Nor is the opinion which has been sometimes held that Caesar's Balbus wrote a civil history of him, to which the completed military history would be an accompaniment, worth discussion.

It will be noticed that Sidonius draws a sharp distinction between *historia*, a literary composition, following all the rules of rhetoric, and *ephemeris*, a biography in looser style, and in more annalistic form. In his excellent article "On the Title of Caesar's Work" (*Transactions of the American Philological Association*, Vol. XXXVI), Professor Kelsey suggests that the word *ephemeris* which occurs in the titles found in some MSS of Caesar's writings may have been taken from *ἐφημερίδες* which Plutarch uses of them in *ca.* 22 of his life of Caesar, and that when Symmachus *Ep.* iv. 18. 5 mentions *ephemeridem C. Caesaris*, he obtained the description from a manuscript. But *ἐφημερίδες* had a long history in the Greek East before Plutarch's time, in connection with loose records of the lives of royal and imperial rulers. For this see the article in Pauly-Wissowa, s. v. It was quite natural that Plutarch should employ the word to render Caesar's *commentarii*. Similar records kept at the court of Augustus are described as *commentarii diurni* in Suet. *Aug.* 64, which passage shows that selections from them were published and formed a sort of "court circular." But *ephemeris* (a Latin word) was applied to these records as early at least as the time of Severus Alexander, and also

¹ Sidonius in *Ep.* viii 1 b, alludes to Caesar's authorship and oratory and to Cicero's praise of him, and elsewhere he shows interest in the great conqueror of his native Gaul. In *Carm.* 7. 152 there is a reference to Caesar's fortunes at Gergovia and in *Carm.* 23. 15 to the siege of Massilia. Cf. also *Ep.* ii. 14. 1.

² A contemporary, T. Ampius Balbus, attacked him in a historical work (Suet. *Iul.* 77).

to any imperial biography written after the fashion of Suetonius and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*.¹ The facts are given by Friedländer *Sittengeschichte* I⁵, pp. 176 ff., and Peter *Geschichtliche Literatur über die römische Kaiserzeit* I, pp. 370 ff.

The paucity of references in later Roman literature to the *Bellum Civile* has often been observed, and has indeed been made one ground for refusing to acknowledge Caesar's authorship. Orosius knows nothing of the work. At first sight, a passage of Claudian, "de VI consulatu Honorii," 1. 379, seems to imply that he was equally ignorant. It runs thus:

cum Gallica vulgo
Proelia iactaret, tacuit Pharsalica Caesar.

But, if the context be carefully examined, it will be seen that there is no reference here to Caesar's writings. The allusion is to the Roman feeling (not on every occasion respected by Caesar) that a triumph should not be treated as having been won by a victory over fellow-citizens.

The last passage to which I shall refer is in the commentary of Servius on Verg. *Aen.* xi. 743. A story is there told that Caesar was once torn from his horse by a Gaul, who was hurrying him along, when another Gaul met them, who knew Caesar, and shouted out his name in derision. But as *caesar* meant *dimitte* in the Gaulish tongue, his captor let Caesar go: "hoc autem ipse Caesar in ephemeride sua dicit, ubi propriam commemorat felicitatem." Some scholars have supposed the tale to have been taken from the "Balbi ephemeris" of Sidonius, imagined to be a work by L. Cornelius Balbus, the agent of Caesar. But the words of Servius do not fit in well with the supposition. The Romans were fond of noting resemblances between Roman names and words in barbarian dialects, and sometimes the resemblances gave rise to legends, such as that concerning the origin of the name Drusus, told by Suetonius *Tiber. C.* 3. Servius himself on *Aen.* i. 286 recounts a story that the name Caesar attached itself to the family because the grandfather of the dictator killed an elephant in Africa and the Punic for an elephant was *caesa*. There may well have been another legend making out the name to be Gaulish. I conjecture that some such story was told by Suetonius in the lost introductory chapters of his life of Iulius, and that he illustrated it by quoting from some autograph paper by Caesar himself the incident of his unexpected rescue.

J. S. REID

GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE
Cambridge

¹ Gellius v. 18. 8 quotes from Asellio the word *diarium* used by Sempronius Asellio to represent *ἐφημερίς* in the sense of a historical writing. But *diarium* took another turn in Latin. Varro (*Nom.* 2. 22) was probably the first to employ *ephemeris* as Latin, but in another sense.